

Jonathan Weinzapfel

State Representative • District 76



Autumn, 1999

Dear Friend,

The General Assembly met for an extended Organization Day in mid-November.

The 2000 session is a "short" session, meaning we will begin session January 10 and finish before March 15.

In the short session, each House member may introduce only five pieces of legislation. While we will not re-open the two-year state budget passed earlier this year, the possibility remains that we may fine-tune some of the appropriations outlined in that legislation.

If you have any concerns or suggestions for change in your state government, please contact me at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan Weinzapfel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

How to contact

Jonathan Weinzapfel

Home

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1-800-382-9842

Reassessment: how will it affect you?

Last December the State Supreme Court ruled that the property assessment guidelines used in the collection of property taxes were unconstitutional because property was not assessed uniformly based on “objectively verifiable data.”

After the Court’s ruling, I supported a bill to delay the reassessment. This would have allowed the board time to work out a good program. This also would have given the legislature time to review the guidelines and ease the shift to reassessment.

However, this measure was defeated by the Senate.

The new reassessment guidelines written by the State Tax Board will not increase the total money generated by property taxes, they merely shift the burden among taxpayers. While one taxpayer may see an increase, another taxpayer will have a decrease. I will do everything I can to ease the burden for homeowners.

The new assessment guidelines will affect property tax bills starting in 2002.

I am working to find alternative approaches that will ease the burden for homeowners. The State Tax Board has discussed several options, including phasing in the property tax shifts, rather than raising them all at once. Again, I intend to do all I can to lower the property tax burden for homeowners.



Rep. Weinzapfel discusses legislation with Speaker John R. Gregg (D-Sandborn).

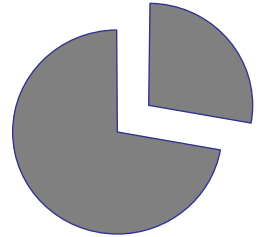
Preventing school violence

Keeping our children safe is a top priority for the Indiana General Assembly. Indiana’s Safe Haven Initiative provides additional funding to allow schools to stay open for extended hours for programs to reduce substance abuse, reduce violent behavior, and promote educational progress. Schools open before and after the regular class day provide a safe place for children who would otherwise be home alone.

The Safe Haven program provides funding for emergency preparedness and school safety programs. The state budget also provided \$750,000 to train school safety specialists. It is important for school administrators and teachers to have proper training that allows them to identify and correct problems before serious trouble occurs.

One of the key components of the state safe school initiative is the coordination of safe school programs county-wide. The new state budget provides \$2000 to each school corporation to be used to participate in a county school safety commission.

While our schools cannot and should not become prison-like facilities, we must do whatever we can to protect our children from violence — especially when they are in the classrooms preparing for their futures.



In 1997, 28 percent of adolescent boys reported carrying a gun, knife or club

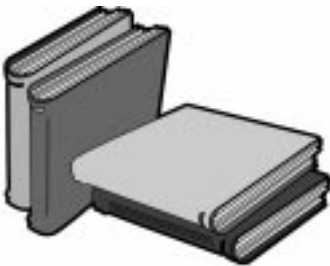
Educating our children

Legislation passed during the 1999 session allowing students who do not pass the ISTEP Gateway Examination to graduate, provided they meet certain other requirements. The requirements include: (1) a 95 percent attendance rate, (2) a “C” average and (3) the student must obtain a written recommendation from a teacher in each subject area in which the student has not received a passing score.

The legislation also contains provisions for students with disabilities, allowing the student’s case conference committee to determine if a student with disabilities is eligible for graduation. The act also provides that all students in Grade 10 must take the examination.

How are we doing?		
	Indiana	U.S.
High School Graduation Rate	87.9%	82%
College Attendance Rate	53.5%	41%
SAT Composite Score	981	1013

Financial assistance for college



Attending college is a key factor for later career success. Indiana’s future depends on good students who graduate from college. Students interested in attending college may be eligible for several sources of additional funding.

- *Twenty-First Century Scholars* helps Indiana families afford a college education for their children. To apply for the program, the student must be an Indiana resident, be enrolled in the 8th grade at a public or accredited private school, and be eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the national school lunch program or free or reduced textbooks under the textbook assistance program.

Students must “Step up to the Pledge” by committing to: (1) graduate from an Indiana high school, (2) achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, (3) not use drugs or alcohol or commit any crime, and (4) apply for college admission and financial aid as a senior in high school.

For more information, call 1-800-992-2076.

- The state of Indiana also offers several scholarships including the *Indiana Higher Education Grant*, the *Hoosier Scholarship Award*, the *Minority Teacher Scholarship* and the *Nursing Scholarship*.

For more information on these scholarships, please contact the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana at 1-317-232-2350.

- The U.S. government also assists students in finding funds for college. Grants (which do not have to be repaid) and loans (which do have to be repaid) are available for eligible students. The programs include Stafford Loans, Pell Grants, PLUS Loans, the Work-Study Program and Perkins Loans. Students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Forms are available in high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices or by contacting the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-4FED-AID.

Publications available

The following publications can be requested free of charge from my Statehouse office by calling toll-free 1-800-382-9842:

Relax . . . -- This informational booklet for senior citizens discusses a variety of issues, from taxes to health problems to leisure activities.

Higher Education -- A 24-page publication for those interested in pursuing a higher education degree, detailing many Indiana colleges and universities as well as occupational and vocational schools.

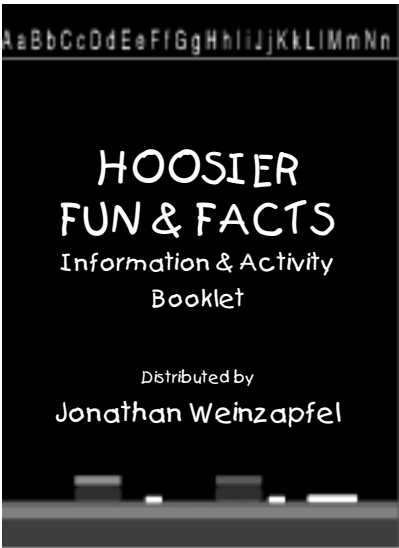
Guide to State Agencies -- This booklet details various agencies within Indiana state government, listing phone numbers, functions and general areas of responsibility for each of the state agencies.

Hoosier Fun and Facts -- Designed for elementary school-aged children, this information and activity book teaches students about their state through a combination of text, puzzles and other educational activities.

Attention Teachers

We the People . . . Project Citizen is a civic education program for middle school students. The Indiana House of Representatives will help to facilitate the state finals on May 5, 2000. For information on how to involve your students, please contact:

Thomas Vontz
Indiana University
2805 E. Tenth St.
Bloomington, IN 47408
812-855-0467 / 800-266-3815



State Phone Numbers

State Information	1-800-457-8283
Indiana House	1-800-382-9842
Indiana Senate.	1-800-382-9467
Governor's Office.	317-232-4567
Secretary of State	317-232-6531
Motor Vehicles.	317-233-6000
Natural Resources.	1-800-622-4931
Utility Regulatory.	1-800-851-4268
State Tourism	1-800-289-6646
Department of Correction.	1-800-680-5889
Department of Education	317-232-6611
Department of Health	317-233-1325
Family & Social Services	317-233-4454

Indiana legislators deliver tax cuts totaling \$672 million



The 1999 biennial state budget provides \$672 million in savings for Indiana taxpayers. I have detailed some of the tax cuts below.

- *Homeowners:* Property taxes on a taxpayer's principal place of residence can be deducted up to \$2,500. The deduction is located on Schedule 1 of the IT-40.
- *Senior citizens:* The income tax deduction for most seniors was increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Each qualified taxpayer may take this deduction — meaning married couples may now deduct \$3,000 from their adjusted gross income. Many seniors also received an increase in the property tax deduction from \$1,000 to \$2,000.
- *Dependent children:* The income tax deduction was increased from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for dependent children under age 19 and full-time students under age 24. You may reduce your Indiana adjusted gross income for each qualifying dependent.
- *Renters:* The renters' income tax deduction was increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000. This deduction is located on Schedule 1 of the IT-40 or the back of the IT-40EZ.
- *Small businesses:* Businesses will no longer have to "add-back" property taxes deducted on their federal returns.
- *Inventory tax cuts:* The inventory tax was eliminated for 87 percent of Indiana farms and businesses, saving \$129.6 million.
- *Property tax cuts:* The county welfare funds and the county welfare administration funds were eliminated from local property taxes, saving \$67.6 million.

2000 Page Program

Serving as a page during the 2000 session allows any child age 13 or older the opportunity to gain a firsthand glimpse of how the legislative system works.

Students will be excused from school on the day they are serving as a page and will spend the entire day at the Statehouse.

Interested students should send me their name, parent or guardian's name, address, phone number, school and two different dates when the student could come to the Statehouse between January 10 and February 29, 2000.

Please remember session is short and places fill up fast, so apply as soon as possible.

Our mission is to create an environment for Indiana's youth that is conducive to both fun and learning, and which will stimulate student interest in government and community involvement. To that end, we plan to educate students regarding legislative processes; to give students an opportunity to meet their community leaders; to encourage student involvement in the community; and to introduce students to other students around the state.



***Important information about
Session 2000 inside!***

Representative Jonathan Weinzapfel
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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